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MARTIN McHENRY KENNEY.

CHARLES W. RAMSDELL.

The grandfather of Captain Kenney emigrated from Ireland to Pennsylvania about the end of the eighteenth century. One of his sons, John Wesley Kenney, removed to Kentucky and married there. Later he moved to Illinois and settled on the bank of the Mississippi about fifteen miles above Rock Island, at that time a very thinly settled region. Here was born his son, Martin McHenry Kenney, on December 11, 1831.

When the Black Hawk War broke out the family took refuge in a frontier fort, while the father served in the army until the struggle was over. The home having been destroyed in the meantime, they now went back to Kentucky. Here in the late summer of 1833 the cholera broke out. The family fled to the mountains, and in October began the long journey to Texas.

On December 17, 1833, they landed on the west bank of the Brazos where the elder Kenney built the first cabin in what was later the town of Washington. The next year he was granted a headright league as a member of Austin's colony and removed to Austin County, ten miles south of Brenham. Here young Kenney grew to manhood. He attended such schools as the country afforded,—the earliest being the first public school in Texas,—but received the greater part of his instruction from his mother, who was a well educated woman. In 1848 he attended for a short time the McKenzie College at Clarksville until an attack of typhoid fever forced him to withdraw.

Two years later he began his wanderings with a trip to Mexico "to see the world." For a few months he was county clerk at Laredo, and then in 1851 he set out with a party of adventurous gold-seekers for California. After several years of futile search for a fortune in the mining regions, he returned to Texas in 1856, and settled in Goliad, where he became county surveyor. When the Civil War broke out he volunteered and was made captain of Company K, 21st Texas Cavalry, and served in that capacity until he was honorably discharged at its close. Immediately thereafter he

went to Mexico and thence to Central America, where he engaged in the shipping of mahogany timber. Moving on again, he went to South America, where he traveled about for a couple of years, chiefly in the Argentine Republic. In 1869 he returned to his mother's home in Texas. Shortly afterwards he joined the force of the Texas Rangers and served with them for some time.

In February, 1877, he married Miss Annie Matthews of Chappell Hill, Texas. They removed to Bellville, where they lived for fourteen years. Here Captain Kenney took up his old business of surveyor, and practiced law. In 1892 he was elected to the Legislature from Austin County, and served for two terms.

In July, 1895, he was appointed Spanish translator in the General Land Office at Austin. His long acquaintance with the land system of Texas and his proficiency in the Spanish language enabled him to perform his duties in a highly creditable manner, while his energy, punctuality, and conscientious attention to all details inspired the fullest confidence of the officials of the State. Because of the intricacies and confusion of the Texas land system and the consequent necessity of obtaining accurate translations of the Spanish and Mexican documents, land grants, deeds, etc., Captain Kenney's work here was of the greatest importance to the State. It proved to be his final labor, for with the exception of a little more than a year, 1899-1900, he filled this position until shortly before his death. In 1901 he was stricken with paralysis, losing the use of his right hand. With indomitable will he remained at his post, but his strength gradually failed and he died, February 8, 1907.

Throughout his life Captain Kenney exhibited those stalwart qualities of mind and character that enabled his fellow pioneers to conquer the wilderness. He had seen the little band of colonists under Austin grow into a nation and then into a mighty State of the Union; he had attended the first log-cabin school in the wild frontier, and had lived to see his own children attending a University in the same land; and he was interested in all that pertained to the development of the State. One of the earliest members of the Texas State Historical Association, he maintained an active interest in its affairs until his death.